

Message Text

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46-40

ACTION EB-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 EUR-10 NSC-10 NSCE-00 FAA-00

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 RSR-01 (ADP) W

----- 107053

R 021313Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1457

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 18104

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN, FR, UR

SUBJ: CRASH OF TU-144

DEPT PASS FAA; BRUSSELS FOR FAA

1. ZIEGLER, PRESIDENT OF AEROSPATIALE, HAS TOLD US IN CONFIDENCE THAT, WHILE NO FIRM CONCLUSION HAS YET BEEN REACHED ON CAUSE OF TU-144 CRASH AT PARIS AIR SHOW, MOST FRENCH EXPERTS BELIEVE THAT THE CAUSE WAS A SUDDEN FAILURE OF FUEL INTAKE.

2. ZIEGLER SAID THAT THE PILOT WAS OBVIOUSLY PUTTING THE PLANE THROUGH ITS PACES IN AN EFFORT TO EQUAL THE PERFORMANCE OF THE CONCORDE, WHICH HAD IMMEDIATELY PRECEDED THE TU-144 DEMONSTRATION. HE RECALLED THAT THE CONCORDE HAD MADE A HIGH-SPEED TOUCH-AND-GO LANDING IN FRONT OF THE STANDS AND THEN WENT INTO A VERY STEEP CLIMB. ON ITS LAST PASS THE TU-144 HAD EXACTLY DUPLICATED THIS PATTERN. THE QUESTION WHICH HAS STILL TO BE ANSWERED IS WHAT CAUSED THE PLANE TO LOSE SPEED AND FALL OVER INTO AN UNCONTROLLED DIVE AT THE TOP OF ITS CLIMB. ADVANCING TH HYPOTHESES THAT SUDDEN INTERRUPTION OF FUEL INTAKE WAS THE CAUSE, ZIEGLER SAID THIS COULD EITHER HAVE RESULTED FROM MECHANICAL FAILURE OR FROM THE FACT THAT THE PLANE WAS FLYING WITH A VERY LOW FUEL SUPPLY. ON THE LATTER HYPOTHESIS THE LEVEL
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IN THE TANKS MIGHT HAVE BEEN SO LOW THAT IN A VERY STEEP CLIMB

THE FUEL LEVEL IN THE TANKS FELL BELOW THE INTAKE LINE. IN SUPPORT OF THIS HYPOTHESIS, ZIEGLER SAID THAT HE ARRIVED ON THE SITE TEN MINUTES AFTER THE CRASH AND FOUND THAT THE FIRE WAS ALREADY OUT, PROOF OF THE FACT THAT THERE WAS VERY LITTLE FUEL ABOARD.

3. ZIEGLER SAID THAT ONCE THE PLANE HAD FALLEN OVER INTO A DIVE, THE GAME WAS UP. HOWEVER, THE PILOT, WHO WAS OBVIOUSLY VERY COURAGEOUS, HAD MADE A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO PULL UP THE NOSE AS THE PLANE NEARED THE GROUND. THIS HAD PUT PRESSURES ON THE AIRFRAME, WHICH IT HAD NOT BEEN BUILT TO WITHSTAND, AND IT BEGAN DISINTEGRATING.

4. IN VIEW OF THE POLITICAL SENSITIVITY OF THIS MATTER, ZIEGLER REQUESTED THAT HIS VIEWS BE TREATED WITH GREAT CONFIDENCE.
IRWIN

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NNNNMAFVVZCZ

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EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

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TAGS: ETRN, FR, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
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